

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following statement on the 43rd anniversary of the enactment of the *Fair Housing Act of 1968* :

"Passed just days after the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination and considered a seminal act in achieving racial equality in a deeply divided country, the *Fair Housing Act* prohibits housing discrimination based on race, national origin, religion, color, sex, familial status, and disability. The *Fair Housing Act* reinforced one of the most fundamental elements of the 'American Dream' for all citizens—to own a home and live in a neighborhood of his or her choice, free of discrimination. This landmark piece of legislation is the broadest, yet sadly, one of the least enforced of our nation's civil rights laws. Today, more than 3.7 million fair housing violations occur each year and an approximate 30,000 are filed through nonprofit fair-housing agencies, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Justice, and state and local agencies.

"In Congress, I have worked tirelessly to put an end to housing inequality and discriminatory practices. Over the past decade, however, we have seen the inequality gap widen with the recent collapse in the housing market.

"Hoping to dispel the myths on housing, I recently hosted a congressional briefing for Members of Congress and their staff to learn more about the prevalence of housing discrimination and the future of fair housing in America. A panel of distinguished speakers spoke to the realities in housing inequity and recommended solutions to a very real problem in America.

"Housing discrimination is absolutely unacceptable in today's society. I will continue fighting against inequality in all forms and urge that the nation reject the status quo in favor of a more equitable future."

In the 111th Congress, Hastings co-sponsored H.R. 6500, the *Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Act*, introduced by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY). This bill hoped to amend the *Fair Housing Act* to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, or

marital status. He is currently an original co-sponsor of H.R. 284, the *Veterans, Women, Families with Children, and Persons With Disabilities Housing Fairness Act of 2011*

, introduced by Rep. Al Green (D-TX). This bill instructs the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to conduct a nationwide testing program to find the sources and solutions to housing discrimination. It also creates stricter guidelines for funding and matching grant programs to help assist in the fight against fair housing violations.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.

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